

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

December 2020

COUNCILLOR VIRGINIA GAY - CABINET MEMBER FOR LEISURE, WELLBEING & CULTURE

For the period November to December 2020

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Business as usual activity

Culture

There has been a reduction in grant applications to the Arts & Culture Fund as a result of Covid 19. One grant application for a rural theatre project was received for the period July 2020 – October 2020. A conditional grant of £2,500 was recommended. Due to Covid 19 some previously funded projects had to be cancelled, postponed or delivered virtually.

The Covid-safe Christmas pier show 'Strictly Xmas' commenced on Friday 4th December, operated with permission of the Council by Openwide, together with Nigel Hogg Productions (Cromer Pier Show's Musical Director). There will be a total of 27 shows up until the 2 January, and many of those shows are already sold out.

Wellbeing

Community transport

Organisations that provide community transport were proactively contacted and encouraged to apply for a grant but the response suggested that generally Community Transport schemes have been suspended or reduced service due to Covid 19 and still have funding available from previous grant awards. One grant application to the Community Transport Fund for the continued funding of a Dial-A-Ride and Medi-Car service was received for the period July 2020 – October 2020. Grants totalling £40,000 were recommended for approval.

The new North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund (NNSCF) reflects the Council's increased focus on environmental sustainability and community wellbeing. The Panel will meet on 7th December to consider eleven applications totalling £115,527.99. For projects requesting NNSCF grants under £1,000 a smaller monthly panel meets to enable decisions on these grant applications to be made more quickly. In November, one application for a grant of £1,000 was recommended for approval.

Social Prescribing

The Council has contracts to deliver Social Prescribing services in North

Norfolk on behalf of Norfolk County Council and two Primary Care Networks in North Norfolk. Three 'Social Prescribers' are employed by NNDC specifically through the NCC contract, which is due to expire on 31st March 2021.

The total of five Social Prescribing Officers support vulnerable people to deal with or manage complex or significant issues which are impacting on their health and wellbeing. Currently this is not a self-referral service. Organisations such as health, social care, police, housing associations and internal NNDC services, with the customer's consent, refer vulnerable people for support. During November, 64 referrals were received. In total this year so far 571 referrals have been received.

This figure is lower than in previous years, probably due to Covid and people not going to their GPs etc. (so their issues may not have been picked up in the usual ways). Following the lifting of the first lockdown the rate of referrals increased, and it is anticipated that, as the longer-term impacts of the pandemic, particularly the ending of the furlough scheme and ending of the suspension on evictions, are felt there will be a significant increase in referrals.

Information, Advice & Guidance

The Council (along with Norfolk County Council) has for long time funded Norfolk Citizens Advice to provide an Information, Advice & Guidance service. This year an 'interim' grant has been given to Norfolk Citizens Advice whilst a review of IAG services is undertaken. The future position will be informed by the outcome of a NCC review into the future funding of IAG and Social Prescribing which is due imminently.

Covid 19 related activity

The Council is working with Norfolk County Council to provide a local Contact Tracing service in North Norfolk. This is for people who have tested positive for Covid 19 but where national or NCC contact tracers have been unable to reach them by phone. A team of NNDC officers will visit people to request that they register details of people they have been in contact with. Support will be also offered to people who have tested positive for Covid 19 to enable them to self-isolate.

NNDC continues to work with NCC and third sector organisations to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents and those experiencing financial hardship or requiring other support due to the impact of Covid 19.

The Council is collaborating with other Norfolk authorities to ensure the Government grant of £2.7m, recently been awarded to NCC for a Winter Support Scheme, is used effectively. Eighty percent of the funding is allocated for families experiencing hardship and 20% for other vulnerable adults. There are three components to the scheme:

- *Grants* to help people buy food, household essentials, Paypoint top ups for gas and electricity and a daily living allowance for living expenses and household bills excluding rent and Council Tax,

- *Pink Orange Ingredients Boxes* - Pink Orange will provide ingredients boxes including recipe guides to targeted families across Norfolk.
- *Free School Meals vouchers* - All schools and educational establishments in Norfolk will have received communication about ensuring that all children who are eligible are signed up for free school meals (the means tested pupil premium element and not the universal free school meals that all children in reception to the end of year 3 are entitled to). Schools are then able to provide a link and code for EdenRed which is the chosen provider of supermarket vouchers to the value of £15 per child per week, for two weeks over Christmas and a Week at February half term - these vouchers can be used at all main UK supermarkets.

Leisure

Sports and Leisure Facilities

The three leisure centres (Fakenham, Splash and Victory leisure facilities) closed on 4 November as part of the Government's national lockdown. The Council's leisure operator 'Everyone Active' worked hard to remobilise the facilities again to reopen on Wednesday 2 December. The aim has been to continue to grow participation in physical activity and improve the health and wellbeing of our residents. The three dual-use sports centres are unlikely to be able to reopen until April 2021.

Countryside

The team has now received its Green Flag feedback reports.

Holt Country Park now plays host to a 'Forest Schools' initiative which launched in November: 'Wild by Nature'. This is an excellent addition to the Park, bringing in income.

The team are working hard to support the Council's 110,000 trees project. There are a number of tree planting events in December with more planned for 2021.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Following the review of advice and guidance provision within the District, a report will be prepared setting out the options and recommending the most effective use of the resources available to address the needs of North Norfolk residents.

On December 11th the Cultural Consortium's bid for the North Walsham HAZ project will be submitted to Heritage England.

3 Meetings attended
Since last I reported to you I have attended meetings on the Arts and Community Transport grants, the Go Go Discover Mammoth project, the Cultural Consortium bid and the branding for the Sheringham Leisure Facility in addition to regularly scheduled council meetings.